

Using Automated Systems In Your Business



The Professional Marketing Assistant (Automated System)

Statistics and reports have shown that up to 98% of all people who start a home-based online business will quit within 90 days. One of the biggest reasons is they discover it is too much work for them to do all by themselves, and they sure can't think about hiring someone to help.

One of the reasons it is seen to be so much work is because they have not automated. They do not have the proper systems in place that will allow them to easily automate the many process of starting a home business.

Let's take a look at the old traditional business Systems VS New Automated Systems.

Many of the old traditional systems in place would be to have your secretary keep track of each individual customer and make sure they were mailed out a thank you card or special advertisements.

This was long a tedious work for the secretary to have to go through with each customer.

The new automated systems allow you to keep track of the customers in one place and automatically send out messages as each one comes into your sales funnel. It also allows you to write up one message and with a couple clicks send it out to your entire customer list.

Systems are like having your own sales assistant working for you but not having to worry about paying their health insurance each month, and scheduling vacations.

What Are Systems?

Systems are used to automate processes.

Systems can include software, hardware, management, and even paper and pen.

As you grow, you will no doubt need systems to automate nearly every aspect of your online business so that you can focus on your vision.

Benefits of Using Systems

If you're the brains behind your business one of your main focuses needs to be your focus on creating the system that fuels it first – This will allow you many benefits:

- Automation

- Speed, repetition and accuracy

- Lower opportunity costs

- Greater Scalability

- Time Saver

- Freedom to do whatever you want

Eliminates many reasons for failure
Those last two in my book are pretty important.

What Systems Will I Need?

There are many different systems you'll need in your business, but we'll focus on the ones you'll need now.

The most important (and not in this order) are:

Support

Customer Management

Affiliate Management

Payment Processors

Something to always remember is that with anything you do online, always keep your systems updated to newest versions. Many systems will come with bugs that need to be fixed. The new versions will usually be the fix to these bugs and help you have an even better system in place.

Your online shopping cart system Have capabilities to instantly connect to your online merchant account, start taking orders, and even upselling for you - automatically.

Autoresponders, follow up on sales leads, manage your opt in mailing lists and relationship building, and build repeat business - automatically.

Affiliate systems and affiliate tracking software make Affiliate Recruiting and Management easier than ever – automatically.

Digital delivery system make Ebook and Video downloads and software sales highly profitable - automatically.

Let's take a look at a few of these automated systems you will need to have in place.

Payment Systems

Payment systems will allow you to accept money online.

Some systems will deposit money into your account on a daily basis,

Some you may have to make periodic withdrawals (like with Paypal).

Some may be set to have your money sent out on a 2 week interval or direct deposit to your bank account like ClickBank

Commonly Used Payment Methods

☐ [Paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com)

Pros: Easy to set up, secure, many people have a PayPal account.

Built-in recurring billing system

Fees are generally cheaper than many other alternatives. PayPal currently charges 1.9% to 2.9% plus \$0.30 per transaction

Cons: Some customers unfamiliar with PayPal may think they can't use it. Some countries don't support it.

Many rules to comply with and failure to comply with these rules can result in your account being locked, and your money being held for as long as six months during the investigation.

☐ [Authorize.net](https://www.authorize.net) Payment gateway service provider allowing merchants to accept credit card and electronic checks payments through their Web site and over an IP (Internet Protocol) connection. The relay between the e-Commerce merchant account affiliated website (online shop) and the merchant bank. It is also connected to many credit card sites

Pros: Highly integratable, low-fee, secure, usually the professional choice. Understand the internet community.

Cons: Slightly more difficult to set up. Must have a merchant account which we recommend (powerpay.biz).

We use authorize.net and occasionally PayPal to accept payments. We have tried nearly every other solution and settled on these as the best.

The biggest problem with any payment processor is having your account suspended when you have a big amount of cash going into your account on an inconsistent basis.

Following the rules and regulations each payment processor system has for you to follow and proper communication is the best way to prevent this. Just call up the payment processor you are using and explain to them exactly what it is you are doing.

Customer Management

These next systems we are going to talk about will allow you a method by which to manage your customers and monitor what they have purchased.

You'll need this information to ensure accurate accounting and refunds, and for the ability to look up customers.

Some of them for you to consider are:

[Butterfly Marketing Script](http://butterflyopensourcecode.com) <http://butterflyopensourcecode.com>

[Launch Formula Marketing](#)

[Amember.com](http://amember.com) (more of a monthly membership management system)

1shoppingcart.com (Hosted)

[Clickbank.com](http://clickbank.com) (Hosted)

[Infusionsoft.com](http://infusionsoft.com) (Hosted)

[PayDotCom.com](http://paydotcom.com) (Hosted)(payments through Paypal)

We recommend either 1shoppingcart, Clickbank, or PayDotCom.com for beginners and 1shoppingcart or Infusionsoft for the more advanced students.

I am going to go over 1shoppingcart very briefly. You will need to go and check out each of these customer management systems by visiting the websites, and making the decision as to which one fits your business.

Each of them have good customer support and many come with great training tutorials to help set up and operate.

1ShoppingCart

1ShoppingCart is a hosted shopping cart solution. You might not use all the features immediately and it will take some time to get to know all of them, but that simply mean that the program is capable of growing with your needs.

- Integrates with Paypal and Authorize.net

- Manages customers, payments, and affiliates

- Is easy to set up with a little tinkering

- Provides a simple link to put on your page for customers to order from

- Provides a simple link for affiliates to sign up

- Has a one-click upsell feature

You can also use 1ShoppingCart as a list management system.

Affiliate Management Systems

First off, let's look at some reasons or benefits of even having Affiliates in the first place.

- Ready made sales department

- Profitability (Pay for performance only)

Extended reach (free traffic)

Strengthen your brand (gets your name out there)

Long term growth

Spend your time working on your business rather than in your business.

You help other peoples' monetary and lifestyle dreams come true

When looking for a good Affiliate Management system here are a few things to be looking for.

Things to look for:

Affiliate visitor and sales tracking is a must. You also must be able to track the visitors your affiliates are sending you and what type of sale conversions they are having. You also want to be able to track the number of sales they are getting in order to pay them properly for the sales they make.

Affiliate tools capabilities (Banner/Text link display) Make sure the affiliate software system you are using has the capabilities of setting up good affiliate tools for your affiliates to use during the promotions they are doing for you. You will want to provide them with things like banners, email swipes, blog posts, etc.

Affiliate link generation- This is a must. You need to be able to have the capabilities of creating an individual unique link for each affiliate that signs up. This will become the affiliates ID to keep track of the sales made by each individual affiliate.

Cookie setting- So what is an Affiliate Cookie and what is meant by an Affiliate Cookie Life?

The purpose of an affiliate program is for a product owner or at times referred to as the merchant too credit an individual affiliate when the affiliate refers someone to the merchant from the affiliates website.

What this really means is that someone would click on an affiliate link to the merchant's product from the affiliate web site and make a purchase.

The affiliate is then credited with the sale and paid a commission. Sometimes, however, when an affiliate refers a lead to the merchant, the lead does not make a purchase right away. In many cases the lead may just take a look around at the merchant's web site and the offer and then closes the browser. After some thought, the visitor or lead may return directly back to the merchant site to make the purchase.

Most generally the sale is still credited to the affiliate because of the cookie dropped on the website recognizing this person as coming through the affiliate's link to the website during their initial visit.

When the user first clicks over from the affiliate site to the merchant's site, two things typically happen:

- A cookie is placed on the user's browser by the merchant, and

- The user's cookie is associated with the affiliate site, so that when the user makes a purchase, the affiliate is credited with the referral.

This cookie will have a certain lifespan placed on it by the merchant. This lifetime may be from a few hours to several weeks if not months.

Up until the point that the cookie actually expires, any repeat visit by the visitor or lead to the merchant site will be tagged with the original cookie. This means that any purchase made by the visitor or lead will result in the referring affiliate being issued the credit for the sale by the merchant.

- Commission calculation – I think this pretty much speaks for it-self. Making sure that the commissions are calculated correctly for each affiliate.

- Affiliate reporting- Make sure your affiliate program has the capabilities of creating reports for analyzing a variety of the metrics of your affiliate program. You will want it to be capable of creating reports that can be broken down for any period to the nearest day. Reports that can contain results for all affiliates or just one specific affiliate.

You will want reports so that you can look at sales, lead and click detail, or look at overall summaries of commissions

Multi-tier calculations- the capabilities of correctly monitoring and correctly knowing what sales were made by affiliates that were referred to your affiliate program by other affiliates.

Payment processing- Functions for easily calculating and paying your affiliates

Mailing functions- The capabilities collecting and storing your affiliates contact information and the ease of mailing your affiliates without mailing each one separately.

Hosted vs. Self-Hosted Affiliate Programs

Something else to consider when looking for a good affiliate program is will you want it hosted by the service provider or will it be self-hosted by you!

A hosted service usually is cheap upfront, because the way they make their money is by charging a percentage of every sale.

ClickBank

Paydotcom.com

1shoppingcart

On the other side of the coin are the self-hosted affiliate programs.

An affiliate management script, a self-hosted method, is going to be a larger upfront cost.

Butterfly Marketing <http://butterflyopensourcecode.com>

Launch Formula Marketing

Depending on where your budget is will help you make your decision

Let's look at a few pros and cons of the hosted Affiliate programs.

Clickbank pros

- Existing pool of affiliates

- Affiliates trust Clickbank to pay them (check or direct deposit)

- Accurate affiliate commission tracking

- ClickBank handles affiliate payment distribution

- No hands-on management of affiliates required

One of the cons of ClickBank is that you have no real contact with your affiliates.

1shoppingcart pros

- I can contact my affiliates

- Offer two-tiers of commission levels

- Customize your affiliate's portal

- Create and manage multiple affiliate programs

- Create and manage affiliate resources and tools

- Quickly generate and print affiliate commission reports

- Distribute affiliate earnings via check or PayPal

One of the cons of 1shopping cart is you must find your affiliates. Focus on those that already know, like, and trust you – your existing customers.

Paydotcom.com

- Existing pool of affiliates

- communicate with your affiliates by email

Offers tools for affiliates

Instant payments for affiliates

One or two tier affiliate programs

Higher percentages can be set for JV Partners

Full online statistics and tracking

Affiliate Management Center With Real-Time Statistics

If there is a con I guess we would say that it is, you only can use PayPal as your payment processor.

Email Management

Email management stores your list of options and allows you an easy way to broadcast messages to your list.

Aweber.com

GetResponse.com

1ShoppingCart.com

iContact.com

InfusionSoft also has a very good built-in email system but is the most expensive. Prompt Delivery System

One of the biggest features to look for when signing up for an autoresponder is to look for a service with Prompt Product Delivery; People expect prompt delivery of products.

You want to make sure your emails are going out right away. Especially if those emails are carrying the links to your product download pages.

Unless you can figure out how to work continual twenty-four hour shifts, or hire enough people to constantly monitor incoming sales (while they're eating up your revenue), without a service that offers prompt delivery you have a problem.

You also will want to make sure that you have the capabilities to send out an unlimited number of follow-up messages sent at predetermined interval of time. For example, you can set your autoresponder to send out a new message every day for as long a period as you desire.

This is known as your follow up email series.

Follow Up Messages Benefits & Uses

- Follow up and close sales (Pre-sell)

- Offer your site visitors a special bonus to help conversions

- Build stable relationships

- Welcome messages

- Drip Content (focused on bringing customer to point of purchase)

- Deliver weekly or monthly email training courses

- Profit by saving time and increasing sales and customer retention.

- Educational campaigns

- Send information about your services or products

- Renewal reminders

- Inactive lead campaign (renew interest)

- Email Management –

Hosted Vs. Your Own Server

Again the question comes into play, hosted or hosting on your own server.

Having your list on your own server could potentially get you blacklisted and give you poor email deliverability unless you know a LOT about email technology and can keep up with the ever-changing rules from ISPs.

We highly recommend you DON'T put your list on your own server. Use a third party service such as AWeber communications.

If you self-host be ready to solve all your own autoresponder problems yourself: low email deliverability, IP address blacklisting etc. Also be ready to learn all the technical stuff, including SPF, domain keys, DNS etc., or outsource set up and management.

SPF - (Sender Policy Framework) open standard created to stop forgery of FROM addresses. SPF helps mail servers distinguish forgeries from real mail.

If you don't have a clue as to what I was just talking about you better not have it self-hosted on your own server.

Support Systems

Strengthen business relationship with organized customer support. The best solution is adding a well-managed support system.

Giving customers an email for support is a very poor way to manage support. Email is not the best option for handling support. Although many people get upset having to go to a support desk they soon will understand the reasoning behind the use of a support desk if they ever get to the point of handling customer support.

To many times you will lose emails or never see them when they end up in your spam or junk folder.

Many times the same email address is used to receive email from affiliates and other marketers as well.

Support is one of the most overlooked and important aspects of any business. Many people never recognize the importance of a very good and well run support desk.

It is many times the key Unique Selling Proposition used by many marketers. A good support desk is something that will set you above the rest of the crowd and much appreciated by your customers.

Prepare now for growth because waiting until you are “bigger” can be disastrous.

When looking at support desks make sure they are capable of handling growth potential.

You may be starting out small but I am sure that is not where you want to stay.

Here are some support systems you can use:

Kayako

osTicket (free and easy to install with *Fantastico thru your cpanel from your hosting account*)

PerlDesk

We currently use osTicket Support Suite and are very happy with it. OsTicket could also be perfect for a start-up.

*Fantastico comes with most installs of cpanel

Be A Smart Business Owner

Don't let the automated systems drive you to ruin - be a smart business owner

Marketing systems are great.

We all want to sit at home and let the money pour in, while we play and do things we find more interesting. But the fact of the matter is that there's no such thing as a foolproof automated marketing system.

Whether it's an article generator, payment processing system, customer support system, or an autoresponder system, or any other tool, it needs the guidance of a real human being with a plan.

Successful internet marketers are not born that way. Marketing like any other skill is learned through experience, diligence, ongoing research, and constant training.

Systems Summary

Always automate whenever possible. Life is not a snapshot!

Consistently improve and upgrade your systems!

Plan for growth from the beginning! As you grow, you will no doubt need systems to automate nearly every aspect of your online business so that you can focus on your vision.

There are many great systems that you will be using to build and automate your business... Focus on the most needed right now.

- Support
- Customer Management
- Affiliate Management
- Payment Processors

Continue to manage and monitor your systems... Not a set and forget.